/101 cont./

764 of wine, known to the Miao as "dark night /?/" /hsiao yeh/ to show that both hosts and guests feel grateful and in harmony. After the offering by the son-in-law, the maternal uncle of 764 the deceased, customarily called hou ch'in or hou pei /"empress' 604 relative" or "empress' generation"/ also comes forth with a 605 pig's head to offer in sacrifice. After this ceremony is over, he also invites the paternal male third cousins of the bereaved family and those on the maternal side who came with the maternal uncle to drink together. After the wine has been drunk, one of the paternal male third cousins of the bereaved family or an eloquent elder of the village is asked to act as the go-between to request from the bereaved family huo-pa chiu /"torch wine"/. The huo-pa chiu consists of a certain number of chin of wine, a certain number of chin of meat, towels, and cloth. Those who go with the "empress' relative" each receive a towel and a certain number of ch'ih of cloth "for showing the way." The last item is necessary, but the others may be more or less given at discretion.

764 After the "empress' relative" has received the various 604 items of hou-pa chiu, he is charged with certain duties at the time of carrying the corpse to the grave. Before the procession he has to wrap the white cloth received over his body, wrap his head with a white towel and hold a straw sword with a white towel dangling from the handle. He has to stand before the coffin or before the main entrance, uttering several phrases of [789] a magic formula, and then with the straw sword /102/ he knocks three times on the entrance, whereupon the procession [754] can start off. Holding a fire stick in his hand, the sorcerer picks up the lamp bowl from under the coffin and places it upside down on the coffin, and after uttering spells, he shatters the bowl with the fire stick, and everyone immediately carries the coffin out the entrance. The "empress' relative" still wrapped in white cloth, a white towel on his head, holding a straw sword in his left hand and a torch in his right, marches in front of the coffin, and goes first, leading the way. The filial son in mourning and the mourners march, men before the

/102 cont./

coffin and the women behind it. The people who carry the coffin while on the way ask the deceased's son-in-law for wine to drink, without which they would not proceed. Arriving at the burial ground the "empress' relative" throws down the torch on the grave, and returns the grass sword to the host. The grave pit has already been dug by men sent ahead. Now they burn oiled hemp stalks, which is called "warming up the grave." A geomancer is on hand to mark out the eight diagrams /used in Chinese system of divination/ with rice at the bottom of the grave, and a cock is let down into the pit to peck at the rice, in order to divine the good and bad luck of the host's family. If the cock eats the rice on the left side, then the male members will have good luck, if on the right side, then the female members will have peace. If it eats in the center then both men and women will have luck. After the coffin is laid in the pit, the geomancer, holding a sheng of white, polished rice, stands at the head of the coffin and scatters the rice, making complimentary remarks. The mourning filial son and others kneel at the foot of the coffin, catch the rice in their clothes. After the burial, the geomancer holds a flat, called the "calling-back-the-soul flag," and leads the procession back, and when they arrive at the bereaved family's house, everyone puts a few grains of cooked rice in the mouth to avoid losing the soul. The sorcerer, carrying a bamboo tube full of water, stands at the junction of crossroads or at the main entrance and scatters water with a broom made of green grass, uttering spells, to get rid of the tainted air and to dispel evil spirits.

After returning from the grave and attending to the dispersal of all the relatives and friends from everywhere, the host then must provide a feast for the "torch wine and meat" men brought along by the "empress' relative." If after they have eaten again and again, the hospitality is still inadequate, often it may cause "other shoots to sprout /i.e. troubles/." and cause trouble for the host. After the meal, the paternal third cousin /?/ departs, but the "empress' relative" himself remains.

AKha A04
Miao AE5

M 428 [589] [596] [605] [622] [764]

/247 cont./ case, the widows are free to decide whether to stay or to marry again. If there are no brothers of the deceased, the oldest cousin takes their place; if cousins, too, are lacking, the village chief takes care of the burial and distributes the estate among the house owners of his village.

Among the Akha, under somewhat different regulations, the oldest son of the deceased is the principal heir; if there is no son, the oldest brother.

A 428 [596]

Among the Akha, however, the principal heir takes over only the house of the deceased. The other possessions, such as money, domestic animals, house furnishings, implements, and supplies, are distributed equally among all the sons of the deceased, without waiting for the death of the wife or wives of the former head. If there are no surviving sons, the brothers of the deceased take their place. At any rate, the female members of the family of the deceased, regardless of whether they are widows or daughters, are not considered any more than they are among Meau. They retain only the clothing and the few ornaments that represent their meager personal property, and otherwise they go completely empty-handed.

A [562] [422]

A [595]

/248/ If the chief wife dies, her husband inherits everything, even her personal clothing. Usually, however, he then distributes the latter among the other women who belong to the household.

A [752] [622]

Among the Akha, too, other persons, such as the chief or shaman, have no claim to the estate. Testamentary dispositions are possible only within the legal inheritance regulations. The father of a family, for instance, may, during his lifetime, specify which of his sons should inherit, say, a ring that he particularly values. He can thus pass over the principal heir and bestow the article on a younger son. He cannot, however, bequeath any article of his property to a friend or blood brother outside the family.

A [572] [608]